



THE EARLY LEARNING ALLIANCE NETWORK RECEIVES FUNDING FROM PNC FOUNDATION TO HELP EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS DEVELOP SKILLS TO INTEGRATE STEM/STEAM LEARNING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

FISHERS, Indiana, Dec, 24, 2019— The Early Learning Alliance Network (ELAN) today released details about upcoming educational opportunities for early learning professionals focused on enhancing STEM/STEAM learning for young children. The PNC Foundation provided funding to empower educators and professionals with educational resources that will help them better integrate critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration through play-based and experiential learning for preschoolers.

“Feedback from local early childhood programs indicates a need for early learning educators and caregivers to develop a better understanding of how to nurture the foundational tenants of curiosity, problem solving, and critical thinking through materials, environments, and learning experiences for young children,” Jillian Walker, board president of the Early Learning Alliance Network.

The professional development will include resources to learn about project work, place-based learning, interactive play, pre-coding skills, and more. PNC Foundation is providing the funding in support of [PNC Grow Up Great](#), its bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

“We recognize the role we play in helping ensure that all children have the opportunity to acquire and strengthen the skills they need to succeed,” said Connie Bond Stuart, PNC regional president for central and southern Indiana. “It is crucial that we help provide continuing education for our preschool educators so they have the resources needed to focus on advancing early cognitive and social development.”



Young children at Little Explorers Preschool in Fishers, Indiana dive into learning in the school's STEM lab where students spend time daily.

Research demonstrates that adults responsible for the care and education of young children need help in understanding how to facilitate and support natural play to nurture key skills for young children. Engaging educators and expanding learning opportunities that go beyond standard compliance for early childhood care to include equal attention to developing key skills and leveraging the natural curiosity of children is central to the work of the ELAN.

“Our early childhood professionals must understand how play, curiosity, and problem-solving fully support academic readiness and assist in the overall development of children in their academic, gross motor, fine motor, social emotional and executive functioning tenants,” said Jody Britten, founder of the Early Learning Alliance Network. “By leveraging STEM/STEAM frameworks in early learning we can provide unique entry points for young children to explore, engage, inquire, and experience their naturally curiosity in action.”

The ELAN team is currently working with vendors to have test materials onsite that can help support the learning and hands-on inquiries by participants. All speakers from the event will be live-streamed to a global audience and materials will be made available on the group’s website. Learn more about the event at <https://earlylearningalliancenet.org/stem-steam-in-early-learning/>.

About PNC Foundation

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

About the Early Learning Alliance Network (www.earlylearningalliancenet.org)



The Early Learning Alliance Network has been empowering innovation and opportunities for learning since 2017 throughout the Hamilton County, Indiana area. Our core areas of focus include data to inform planning, policy, and practice; empowering teachers, families, and leaders; supporting K12 transitions; and inspiring innovations that support young children.

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